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### Introduction

In September, 1985, Stuart Hall was an Ida Beam Visiting Professor at the University of Iowa. During his visit, Hall offered three public lectures: "Ideological Dimensions of Communication Theory"<sup>1</sup> (September 4), "Towards A Theory of Ideology"<sup>2</sup> (September 5), and "Religious Movements and Popular Culture: Rastafarianism and Reggae"<sup>3</sup> (September 6). These lectures generated genuine enthusiasm and insightful discussion across different cultural disciplines on the Iowa Campus. The success of Hall's visit was not due simply to the interdisciplinary nature of his work, but also due to his passion, intensity, and intellectual generosity.

On September 5, 1986, the editorial board of the *Journal of Communication Inquiry* conducted an interview with Stuart Hall, inviting him to enter into the currently heated debate on postmodernism. Although Hall's work, affiliated with the "Birmingham tradition," has direct linkage with postmodern cultural practices, this is the first time he has explicitly addressed the relationship between them.

Triggered by Hall's visit, the *Journal of Communication Inquiry* decided to devote a special issue to Hall in recognition of his contributions across the field of human sciences, and to communication studies in particular. (For an introduction to Hall's work, see Grossberg's essay; for a collection of Hall's publications, see the working bibliography at the end of this issue.)

The *Journal* then received enthusiastic support for this special issue from different departments on the Iowa campus, and from other academic communities throughout the country.

In preparing this issue on Hall, we have consciously tried to avoid naive and unnecessary celebration. We begin with Hall's most recent re-reading of Gramsci, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity." We also reprint one of Hall's most important theoretical works, "The Problem of Ideology—Marxism without Guarantees," published here for the first time in this country, in the hope that this important essay will become accessible to a wider audience. In addition, we invited a number of scholars from within the broad cultural studies tradition who are familiar with Hall's work and have already begun to engage with postmodernism to respond to the interview. We invited them to use the interview as a point of departure to address the concrete problematics involved in postmodernism. Our purpose is to open up an area of debate within and beyond the discipline of communication studies, or cultural studies as it is broadly defined.

The result presented here, then, is the beginning of a debate between postmodernism and cultural studies; it marks out an intervention into the current intellectual scene as well as a new configuration within communication studies. At the center of the debate are Hall's Gramscian theories of ideology, articulation and conjunctural analysis, and their French counterpart, including the works of Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Felix Guattari and Jean-Francois Lyotard (to name only a few). Our contributors have attempted to map out the discursive space of postmodernism, to identify both convergent and divergent points between postmodernism and cultural studies, and to point toward the possibility of a new eclectic synthesis built upon Hall's recent formulation of

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the theory of articulation. To be sure, no definitive statement can be made on this debate. We welcome our readers' critical reactions to the issues articulated in the following essays. We feel that the most appropriate way to honor Hall's work and his commitment to an open-ended theorizing "without guarantees," is to facilitate an ongoing debate and dialogue. To paraphrase Hall, the "war of positions" can only be won by a genuine involvement in our postmodern world.

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—K.H.C.

#### NOTES

1. To be published in B. Dervin, L. Grossberg, B. O'Keefe and E. Wartella (eds.), *Rethinking Communication, vol. 1: Paradigm Dialogues: Theories and Issues*, Sage, forthcoming.
2. Published as "Religious Ideology and Social Movement in Jamaica," in R. Boccock and K. Thompson (eds.), *Religion and Ideology*, Manchester University Press, 1985, pp. 269-296.
3. To be published in S. Hall, J. Slack and L. Grossberg, *Cultural Studies*, London: Macmillan, forthcoming.